



# **GAINING EARLY AWARENESS & READINESS FOR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS**

## **PRE-AWARD WORKSHOP**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Gaining  
Early  
Awareness &  
Readiness for  
Undergraduate  
Programs



# Mission of GEAR UP



The GEAR UP Program is a discretionary grant program designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education.

# **2005 GEAR UP OUTLOOK**

The Congress appropriated \$306,488,320 for this program for FY 2005. Of that amount, approximately \$74,000,000 will be available for new state grants and \$113,000,000 will be available for new partnership grants

Approximately 24 new state grants and 226 new partnership grants and will be awarded for FY 2005.

# **2005 GEAR UP AWARDS**

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Estimated Range of Awards: \$100,000 - \$7,000,000 per year for partnership grants and \$500,000 - \$3,000,000 per year for state grants.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$409,000 for partnership grants and \$3,000,000 per year for state grants

Maximum Award: Partnership - We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding \$800 per student for a single budget period of 12 months.

State - We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding \$3,500,000 for a single budget period of 12 months.

# **2005 GEAR UP AWARDS (cont.)**

**Special Note:** Partnership grants originally funded with FY 2005 funds may not use those funds to serve GEAR UP students originally served under a previous grant. For example, FY 2005 funds cannot be used to serve students who received funding under a FY 1999 grant, but have not yet graduated from high school. FY 2005 funds can only be used to serve new cohorts beginning no later than the seventh grade.

## **Out-Year Costs**

Partnership and state grants originally funded with FY 2005 funds will receive level funding in the out-years based on approved funding for the first year award. For example, if a grantee requests \$100,000 of funding in year one of the grant and that amount is approved, the grantee will receive \$100,000 of Federal funding for years two through six of the grant.

# **TWO TYPES OF COMPETITIVE GRANTS**

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**STATE GRANTS**

**PARTNERSHIP GRANTS**

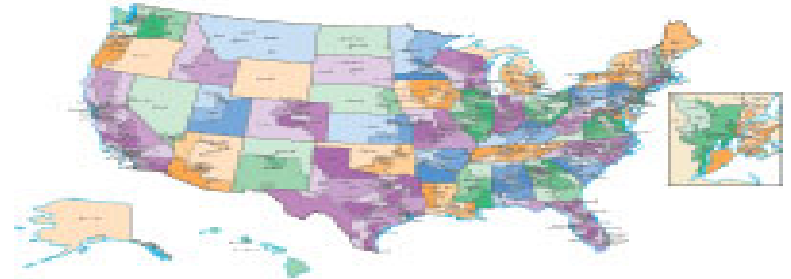


**GEAR UP provides six-year grants to states and partnerships to provide services at high poverty middle and high schools.**

# State Applicants

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**States:** The governor of a state must designate which state agency is applying for and administering the state grant in writing.



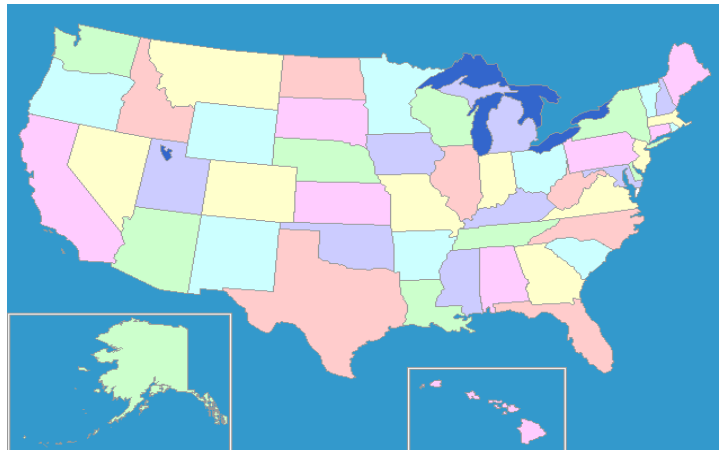
A state may opt to have more than one entity deliver the services. Each applicant should include a letter on official state letterhead, signed by the governor, designating the state's applicant agency.



# STATE PROJECTS

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GEAR UP state grants must include an **early intervention component** including early college awareness and preparation activities through comprehensive mentoring, counseling, outreach, and support services, academic counseling and support, and a **scholarship component** which establishes or maintains a financial assistance program of renewable scholarships for eligible GEAR UP students.



# STATE PROJECTS

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**State grants are required to:**

1. Spend at least 25 percent and not more than 50 percent of their grant funds on the early college awareness and preparation component of their program
2. Spend at least 50 percent of their state grant funds on the scholarship component. *The Secretary may waive this percentage requirement if the grantee demonstrates that it has another means of providing financial assistance to students.*



# STATE PROJECTS

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**States may choose to:**

- ❖ Serve “priority students” or
- ❖ Serve a “cohort” of students



# STATE PROJECTS

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Priority students are students in preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade who are eligible:

1. To be counted under section 1124(c) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Title I);
2. For free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Act; or
3. For assistance under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), authorized by Title I of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act.



# STATE PROJECTS

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States that opt to serve a cohort must provide services to all students in the participating grade levels at a school, rather than a selected group of students. Services must be provided to a cohort starting no later than the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and continuing through high school.

Each cohort must include either:

- 1) all the students in a particular grade level(s) at a participating school(s) that has a 7<sup>th</sup> grade and in which at least 50 percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch under the National School Lunch Act; or

# STATE PROJECTS

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2) all the students in a particular grade level(s) who reside in public housing, as defined in section 3(b) (1) of the United States Housing Act of 1937.

State grant applicants who choose to use the cohort approach must make services available to all students in the participating cohort until that grade level moves on to the next school — for example, moving from middle school to high school. Not all students in a cohort will necessarily opt to take advantage of available services but services must be offered to the whole cohort

# Partnership Applicants

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**Partnerships**: A partnership grant application must be submitted on behalf of a partnership between one or more local education agencies (LEA) or school districts; one or more degree-granting institutions of higher education (IHE); and at least two other entities such as community-based organizations, businesses, faith-based organizations, college student organizations, state agencies, family organizations or parent groups. Each partner should be carefully chosen for its potential to make substantive collaborative contributions to a comprehensive program that will enable low-income students to stay in school, take the right courses, and go to college.



# Eligible Applicants

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## Partnerships (cont.):

By statute, the Partnership's Fiscal Agent, and therefore the applicant, must be either an LEA or an IHE.

However, any member of the partnership may take the lead in identifying the partners, gaining their commitment, and organizing the effort.

Partnership projects may provide scholarships to students, but are not required to do so. *Priority points will not be given to partnership applications which include a scholarship component.*





# PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

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**Partnership grants are required to:**

1. Promote rigorous academic coursework based on college entrance requirements;
2. Work with a whole grade level of students in order to raise expectations for all students;
3. Start with students no later than the 7<sup>th</sup> grade in a school with a 7<sup>th</sup> grade, follow those students through high school graduation; and
4. Inform students and parents about college options and financial aid.



# PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

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A partnership must use a whole grade or “cohort” approach. That is, a partnership must provide services to all students in the participating grade levels, rather than a selected group of students. Services must be provided to a cohort starting no later than the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and continuing through high school. Each cohort must include either:

- 1) All the students in a particular grade level(s) at a participating school(s) that has a 7<sup>th</sup> grade and in which at least 50 percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch under the National School Lunch Act; or
- 2) All the students in a particular grade level(s) who reside in public housing, as defined in section 3(b)(1) of the United States Housing Act of 1937.

# PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

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## The Cohort Model:

The cohort model requires that services must be provided to all students in a participating grade level or cohort until that grade level moves on to the next school.

Once the cohort moves on to another school (for example, moving from middle school to high school), a GEAR UP project must continue to provide services to at least those students in the cohort who attend participating secondary schools that enroll a substantial majority of the students in the cohort.



# PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

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## **The Public Housing Model:**

Whole grade levels of students residing in public housing, as defined in section 3(b)(1) of the United States Housing Act of 1937, are eligible to receive services under GEAR UP Partnerships. This includes public housing facilities operated by Public Housing Agencies.

Section 8 housing is not included in the definition of public housing eligible for GEAR UP Partnerships.

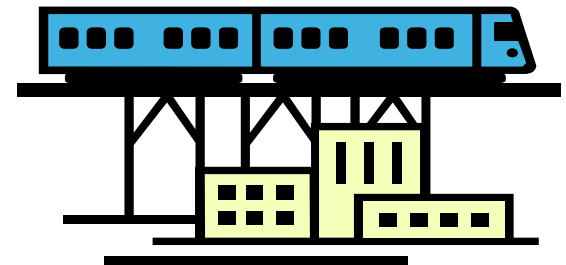


# PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

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A cohort of students residing in public housing may be formed at any school or multiple schools with an appropriate grade level. The school does not have to have a 7<sup>th</sup> grade and does not have to meet the 50 percent eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch requirement.

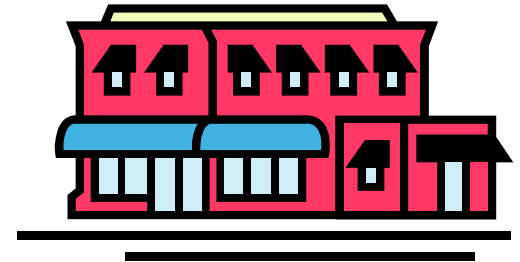
A cohort of students residing in public housing includes all the students in a particular grade level who reside in public housing, but does not include other students in that grade level who do not reside in public housing.



# PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

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A GEAR UP partnership application may include one or more grade levels of students from an eligible school in addition to one or more grade levels of students residing in public housing.



There is no minimum grade level at which services to students in public housing must start, however applicants should consider the most appropriate age at which these services can best be delivered. Applicants should also consider how students in younger grade levels will continue to be served when Federal funding ends after six years.

# PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

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The Public Housing Agency in your area is the best source for obtaining information regarding which publicly assisted housing facilities are eligible under the GEAR UP program.

Names and addresses of Public Housing Authorities can be obtained by calling the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) local offices or through the HUD website at <http://www.hud.gov>.

# Non-Federal Matching Requirements

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Successful applicants are required to match the federal contribution dollar-for-dollar, that is, the non-Federal contribution must equal at least 50 percent of the total six-year project cost.



*Please note that funded applicants will be held to the matching commitment proposed in the application for funding, even if the proposed match is higher than the percent required by statute. No points will be awarded for match exceeding the 50 percent level required by statute.*



# Non-Federal Matching Requirements (cont.)

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Matching contributions may be made from any non-Federal source, and must be documented in accordance with relevant Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars. OMB circulars can be found at: [www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars)

Documentation of matching contributions must contain adequate source documentation for the claimed cost sharing, provide clear valuation of in-kind matching, and provide support of cost sharing by grant partners. Applicants are required to value in-kind contributions in accordance with relevant OMB circulars. In most cases, applicants must value in-kind contributions of facilities and equipment using depreciation or use allowance rather than fair market value.

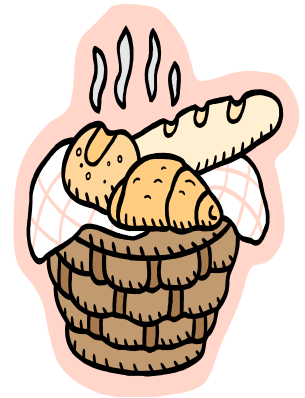
# Reduced Matching Contribution

Under specific circumstances, an applicant may propose a non-Federal contribution of less than 50 percent, but not less than 30 percent of the total cost of the project. This option exists only in specific cases where the level of poverty in the school district can be described by all four of the following conditions:



## REDUCED MATCHING CONTRIBUTION (cont.):

1. 75 percent of all the students in the participating school(s) with a 7th grade in the partnership are eligible for free and reduced-priced lunch; **and**
2. 50 percent of all the students in the participating local education agency (LEA) in which the participating school(s) is located are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch; **and**
3. The participating LEA in which 50 percent of all the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch is the partnership's designated fiscal agent; **and**
4. The partnership has three or fewer IHEs as members.



## **Alternatively, the applicant can apply for a waiver if all four of the following conditions are met:**

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1. 75 percent of all the students in the participating school(s) with a 7th grade in the Partnership are eligible for free and reduced-priced lunch; **and**
2. 50 percent of all the students in the participating local education agency (LEA) in which the participating school(s) is located are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch; **and**



**Alternatively, the applicant can apply for a waiver if all four of the following conditions are met (cont.):**

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3. The partnership's designated fiscal agent is a Historically Black College or University (HBCU), a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), a Tribally Controlled College or University (TCCU), a Native Hawaiian Serving Institution (NHSI) or an Alaska Native Serving Institution (ANSI) under Title V or Part B of Title III or section 316 or 317 of the HEA; **and**
4. The partnership has three or fewer IHEs as members.

## REDUCED MATCHING CONTRIBUTION (cont.):

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If an applicant meets either of these sets of conditions, a waiver for the minimum non-Federal contribution of the partnership may be allowed. **Under no circumstances will the match be lower than 30 percent of the total cost of the project.**

Applicants that wish to apply for a reduced matching percentage must indicate their eligibility and must propose matching budgets reflective of the reduced match percentage. Successful applicants will be required to provide match as proposed in their application budgets, even if they are eligible to provide a lower match percentage.

## REDUCED MATCHING CONTRIBUTION (cont.):

The rationale for the reduced non-Federal match is to provide those partnerships who lack the resources the ability to compete for a GEAR UP grant.

However, applicants who meet the criteria for this reduced match but have the resources may not wish to propose a reduced match if they are concerned that it may diminish the quality of services they can provide.

The reduced match option does not apply to state applicants.



# Developing a Project Budget

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Each application must include a budget justification, as well as a narrative for each budget line item, which explains:

- 1) The basis for estimating the costs of professional personnel salaries, benefits, project staff travel, materials and supplies, consultants and subcontracts, indirect costs, and any projected expenditures;
- 2) How the major cost items relate to the proposed activities;
- 3) The costs of evaluation; and
- 4) A detailed description explaining the matching resources provided by members of the partnership.



# Developing a Project Budget (cont.)

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## **Indirect Costs:**

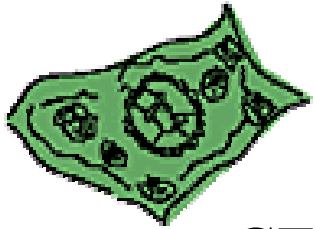
All grant recipients are limited to a maximum indirect cost rate of 8 percent of a modified total direct cost base or the amount permitted by its negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, whichever is less.

Unrecovered indirect costs cannot be used to fulfill non-Federal matching requirements.



# Developing a Project Budget (cont.)

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Applicants should plan and budget for attendance at two annual conferences and workshops sponsored or cosponsored by the GEAR UP Program at the U.S. Dept of Education or a GEAR UP State grantee.

Grantees may also make prudent use of grant funds to participate in other conferences during the year, if these activities will contribute to their efforts to prepare GEAR UP students for college and help inform parents about the cost of college and student financial assistance. Funded projects will need to obtain approval to attend conferences not sponsored or co-sponsored by the Department. Grantees must get approval from their Program Officer before expending funds to attend these conferences.

# EARLY INTERVENTION ACTIVITIES

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- ◆ **Tutoring** - Fundamental to supporting classroom instruction, tutoring supports commitment and incremental success vital to motivating students.



- ◆ **Professional Development and Curriculum Improvement** - Strengthening subject matter knowledge and teaching skills among classroom teachers is integral to GEAR UP's mission of fostering long-term, sustainable school-wide improvements. Funds may be used for training, courses, materials, textbooks, and other professional resources to strengthen classroom instruction.

# EARLY INTERVENTION ACTIVITIES (cont.)

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- ◆ **After-School and Saturday Programs** - GEAR UP funds can be used to extend the school day and week by providing teachers, classrooms, and materials for after school programs. GEAR UP funds can also be used to provide refreshments (e.g., after school snacks) and the transportation associated with these programs, though they cannot be used for purchasing school buses and the like.
- ◆ **Summer Programs** - When college campuses are not fully utilized in summer months, they may supply facilities and other resources for such programs, which can be used as part of a grantee's non-Federal contribution to the project's cost.

# EARLY INTERVENTION

## ACTIVITIES (cont.)

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- ◆ **21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholar Certificates** - All GEAR UP students will receive a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholar Certificate congratulating them on their commitment and reminding them that if they study hard, take challenging courses, and finish high school, they will be able to go to college. On the reverse side of the certificate will be a summary of how much Federal aid may be available to them based on income. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholar Certificates are provided by the Department for grantees to distribute to their students.
- ◆ **Financial Counseling** - Research indicates that low-income families often overestimate the cost of higher education. When college is perceived as unaffordable, there is little attempt to learn about college cost or the numerous forms of financial assistance that help students pay for college.

# EARLY INTERVENTION ACTIVITIES (cont.)

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- ◆ **Financial Counseling** - GEAR UP grants can be used to provide the tools needed to reach out and communicate effectively with families about the real costs of college.



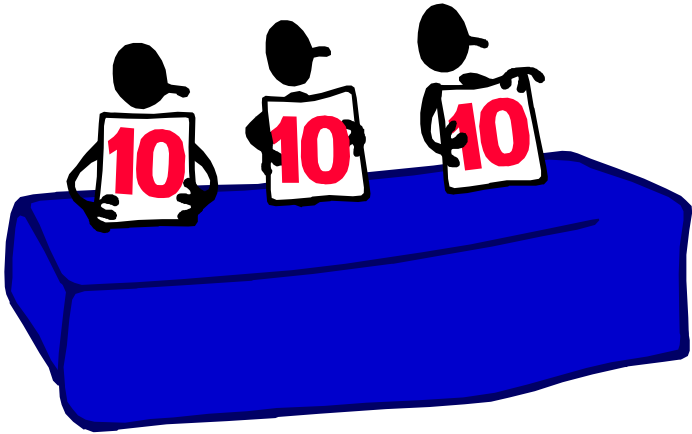
**Mentoring** - Through mentoring, the real life benefits of studying hard and staying in school are impressed on the students by personal observation.

Mentors can also provide friendship, guidance, connection to other resources, and help in resolving conflicts and problems.



# ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL GEAR UP APPLICATION

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- Good, concise writing that clearly addresses the published criteria;
- A solid rationale for what will be done, based on evidence or research findings, not just assertions;
- A description of how you will manage for continuous capacity building and improvement of teaching and learning;

# ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL GEAR UP APPLICATION (cont.)

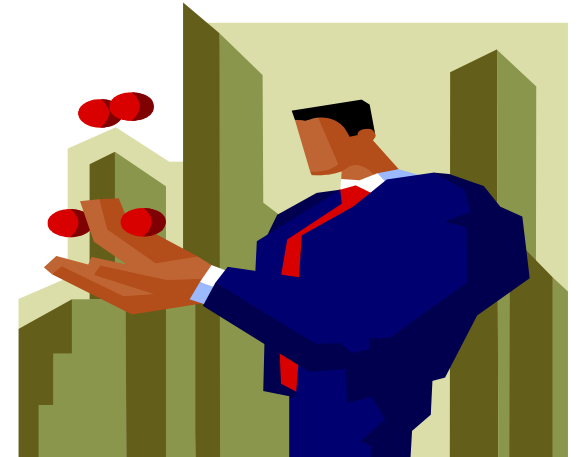
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- Clear, measurable goals, objectives, benchmarks, and outcomes;

## The Difference Between Goals & Objectives

### GOALS

- Can be very broad
- Show a long-range direction
- Describe what you want to achieve over a long period of time
- Are usually not measurable
- May present lofty ideas





# ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL GEAR UP APPLICATION (cont.)

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## OBJECTIVES

- Break the goal into smaller parts
- Are measurable
- Are definitive and specific
- Are attainable
- Include a time frame
- Measure results, not activities or behaviors
- Provide measurable statements that specify what is to be achieved in a scheduled period of time in order to progress towards the goal

# ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL GEAR UP APPLICATION (cont.)

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- The provision of services that are directly linked to objectives, promote acceleration for traditionally underserved youths, and produce measurable outcomes;
- Baseline data;
- A reasonable plan for program sustainability and carrying on after the federal funding of the project ends;
- Incorporation of performance indicators in the evaluation process;

# ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL GEAR UP APPLICATION (cont.)

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## Performance Indicators

The Department's specific goal for the GEAR UP Program is: “to significantly increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in post-secondary education.”

**Objective 1:** Increase the academic performance and preparation for post-secondary education for GEAR UP students.

**Objective 2:** Increase the rate of high school graduation and participation in post-secondary education for GEAR UP students.

**Objective 3:** Increase GEAR UP students' and their families' knowledge of post-secondary education options, preparation and financing.

# SELECTION CRITERIA

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The Secretary considers six criteria drawn from the Education Department General Addministrative Regulations (EDGAR):

1. The need for the project;
2. The quality of project services;
3. The quality of project personnel;
4. The quality of the management plan;
5. The quality of the project evaluation; and
6. The adequacy of project resources.



# SELECTION CRITERIA: Need (15 Points)

## **Applicants should address:**

- The magnitude/severity of problem (i.e., baseline data);
- Specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities and how they will be addressed; and
- The likelihood that proposed services will address the participants' needs (e.g., gaps in students' academic performance).

The purpose is not to portray the bleakest picture possible, but rather to identify what needs are to be addressed and what deficiencies exist in the current program.

# SELECTION CRITERIA: Quality of Project Services (20 Points)

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## **Applicants should address:**

- The appropriateness of services in addressing needs through the 12th grade, including the provision of scholarships, if appropriate;
- How services reflect research and effective practice;
- The quality, intensity, and duration of staff development and its proposed effectiveness;
- The impact of services for its intended recipients; and
- How system reform will have an impact on program improvement and sustainability.

# SELECTION CRITERIA: Quality of Project Personnel (15 Points)

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## **Applicants should address:**

- The qualifications of project director and key personnel;
- The efforts to hire individuals from underrepresented groups; and
- The number and types of personnel needed to meet the project's objectives.

A position description should be included for all key personnel, even if key personnel has already been identified.

# SELECTION CRITERIA: Quality of the Management Plan (15 Points)

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## **Applicants should address:**

- The adequacy of the plan to achieve quantifiable objectives on time and within budget;
- Clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and benchmarks or milestones for accomplishing tasks;
- The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback, data collection, and continuous improvement; and
- The adequacy of time commitments of key personnel in meeting objectives.



# SELECTION CRITERIA: Quality of the Project Evaluation (20 Points)

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## **Applicants should address:**

- The use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to measurable objectives and outcomes; and
- The implementation of a mechanism to continuously assess progress toward achieving objectives and outcomes, and to obtain feedback on program services and provisions that may need to be altered.

# SELECTION CRITERIA: Adequacy of Resources (15 Points)

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## **Applicants should address:**

- The relevance and commitment of each partner to the implementation and success of project;
- The evidence of carefully selected partners that have committed to accomplishing specific objectives and to work as a team; and
- The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends.

# QUESTIONS!!

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# GEAR UP CONTACT INFORMATION

[www.ed.gov/programs/gearup](http://www.ed.gov/programs/gearup)

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